

Medicine initiative. The purpose of the Food as Medicine campaign is to educate local and national leaders, academics and citizens about the value of nutrition services for those fighting disease.

We have the information we need to make great strides in recognizing the therapeutic effects of nutrition for those living with life-threatening illnesses, and I urge my colleagues to work together to ensure that all critically ill Americans have access to food and nutrition therapy as part of their treatment plans. These services improve the efficacy of medications and the quality of life of those suffering and their families. It is a simple but crucial step in improving the quality of health care in this country.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 3 minutes.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of accountability in Congress. This year, taxpayers will pay the retirement benefits for Dan Rostenkowski, Duke Cunningham and Bob Ney. What do these men have in common? All are retired Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. All are convicted criminals. Each abused his office by committing fraud, bribery or conspiracy, and each was found guilty in Federal court.

Despite their convictions, these three representatives and over a dozen other former lawmakers remain eligible to draw taxpayer-funded pensions for their service. The exact amount of the payments vary, of course, but the average is about \$47,000 per year. That's more than the average American makes. Let me tell you, it's certainly more than the average Kansan makes. Certainly a lot more than the average person in the Second District of Kansas makes.

Mr. Speaker, when the new majority was sworn into the House of Representatives, we had a clear mandate from Americans—End the scandals. Clean up Congress. We've already taken meaningful first steps toward reform. In our first days, we passed an ethics package that banned Members from accepting gifts from lobbyists. We blocked representatives from flying on corporate jets. And we prevented Congressmen from pressuring businesspeople to fire or hire for political reasons.

That last one to me is especially important. Before this Congress, our Congressmen were out there actually influencing people and saying, if you don't agree with my politics, we're asking you to hire or fire businesspeople. It was so wrong.

But our work is not done and it never will be done as long as convicted criminals can draw a congressional pension. Congress can and should revoke the

pensions of convicted lawmakers. But for decades now, even as payments have totaled millions of dollars, this body has quietly ignored the problem. But no longer. Today, the bill we will consider this afternoon incorporates legislation that I authored to strip the pensions of these crooked lawmakers. The final bill also sets limits on the so-called revolving door of lawmakers who are turning into lobbyists, and it imposes financial disclosure requirements on the lobbying industry. Sunlight is the best disinfectant and we need a whole lot more transparency still.

Taken together, these changes represent the most significant ethics overhaul to pass the Congress in decades. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. By enacting these sweeping reforms, Congress can begin to recover from the long years of scandal and corruption. Congress can begin to earn back Americans' trust.

ETHICS REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, when I was campaigning last year for this seat in Congress, we talked about a lot of issues. We talked about Iraq. We talked about global warming. But we also talked about a very important issue on ethics. Ethics in Congress. It is disappointing to me that people in Indiana and around the country don't have a lot of respect for Members of Congress. I think our approval rating right now is at 23 percent. And one of the reasons why the approval rate is at 23 percent is because we're not doing a very good job in Congress in investigating the wrongdoings of a few Members.

And I want to emphasize it's just a few Members. Because most Members in this August body are honorable people. But there are a few that are spoiling the basket. We need to do a better job of policing the Congress of the United States. And so one of the things that I have done and one of the campaign promises that I want to keep that I made during the campaign last year is making sure that we clean up our act in Congress. One of the ways that we do that is changing the way we govern ourselves here in Congress. Right now in Congress, the Ethics Committee has a hard time with investigating Members of Congress because they are our colleagues. It's kind of like investigating members of your own family. It's hard to do. It's just natural that Members of Congress are reluctant to investigate the wrongdoings of their own Members. And so I think we need a change. We need to have an independent body of members who are investigating the minor wrongdoings of Members of Congress. And so I propose and have intro-

duced legislation that would set up a new committee of Congress, of former Members of Congress who know this institution, who respect this institution, who will do the investigations that need to be done about a few Members of Congress who are misbehaving.

This new body would have subpoena powers. They would have all the powers that the present Ethics Committee has to them now, but they would be independent. And that's what we need. We need an independent committee that would investigate the wrongdoings of a few Members of Congress. We need to make this bipartisan. We need to restore the respect and honor of this Congress. A 23 percent approval rating is not acceptable and we need to do a better job. I believe that having former Members of Congress on a committee to investigate the wrongdoings of a few, and I emphasize a few Members of Congress, is the way to go. We need to make progress on this. We need to do this. We're going into the August recess. I hope that when we come back after the August recess that we will actually implement and pass into law an independent body of former Members of Congress to investigate those people who are doing what they should not be doing and that we can get about the business of restoring the integrity of Congress. I think it's very important.

I've been in politics for 20 years. It's an honor for me to serve in this body, and to think that only 23 percent of the people have faith and confidence in the Congress is not acceptable. I believe that setting up an independent committee of former Members of Congress can help at least restore some of the integrity that we have lost in Congress.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 25 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Richard D. Turpin, Second Baptist Church, Catskill, New York, offered the following prayer:

Our Father and our God, Creator and everlasting Redeemer, we come asking Your Holy presence to be with us today. We are filled with great joy that You allowed us to gather here this morning. We thank You for being our protector of lasting nights lying down and the guidance of this morning's sunrise.

Father, we ask Your Holy Spirit to bless the work of this day and bless the